



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Division of Publications  
Press Service



12/27/21

Release - Immediate.

DEC 29 '21

ESTABLISHMENT OF REFUGES  
BRINGS INCREASE IN BIRDS.

The work of wild birds in the destruction of injurious insects is worth at least \$400,000,000 annually to the American farmer and horticulturist, and in recognition of their valuable aid and charm, and to encourage their presence, the establishment of community bird refuges throughout the country, on farms, bird preserves, and elsewhere, is increasing. Useful suggestions for the establishment and maintenance of community bird refuges are contained in Farmers' Bulletin 1239, issued by the United States Department of Agriculture, a copy of which may be obtained free from the department at Washington, D. C.

"On the average there are in the United States only about two birds to the acre, but where they are protected and encouraged it has been demonstrated that a very great increase over the normal bird population can be secured. No fewer than 59 pairs to the acre is the number reached in the most successful of these attempts reported. Valuing the services of birds at 10 cents each--an estimate ridiculously low, but used to insure a safe minimum--the birds of the United States prevent an increase in the annual damage done by insects of more than \$400,000,000.

"A particular farm may not have so large a bird population as it should, and therefore may not be deriving the benefit which is its due.

The most effective means of increasing the number of birds is protection, and protection in its best sense is afforded by the establishment of bird refuges."

A bird refuge may be established in a small way on a farm or through a cooperative bird preserve. In the latter case, the plan has proved popular and successful as a means of establishing colonies of game birds, such as pheasants.

"In creating a useful bird refuge," says the bulletin, "the first step is to insure adequate protection against all bird enemies; the second, to see that plenty of nesting sites suited to the needs of the various birds are available; and the third, to improve food and water supplies if necessary." Bird refuges also may be established along roadways and right-of-ways, with particularly attractive and beneficial results.

Hardly an agricultural pest escapes the attacks of birds," says the bulletin. "The alfalfa weevil has 45 different bird enemies; the army worm, 43; billbugs, 67; cotton-boll weevil, 66; brown-tail moth, 31; chestnut weevils, 64; chinch bug, 24; clover-root borers, 85; clover weevil, 25; codling moth, 36; cotton worm, 41; cutworms, 98; forest tent caterpillar, 32; gipsy moth, 46; horseflies, 49; leaf-hoppers, 120; orchard tent caterpillar, 43; potato beetle, 25; rice weevil, 21; seven-teen-year locust, 38; twelve-spotted cucumber beetle, 28; white grubs, 67; and wireworms, 168."